

# ACCESSLETTER

## *Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities*

### **Center for Adult Education Combines Access with Historical Preservation**

The grand re-opening of the Cambridge Center for Adult Education (CCAE) main building at 42 Brattle Street will celebrate "a wonderful example of how accessible design can be merged harmoniously with historical preservation," says Michael Muehe, Executive Director of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Ceremonies in the new Garden Courtyard of Brattle House are scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m.

For over 100 years, first as the Cambridge Social Union, CCAE has enjoyed this great Harvard Square location in one of the ten oldest houses in the City of Cambridge. The building was constructed around 1727 for William Brattle and occupied as a residence until 1889. It is the only 18<sup>th</sup> century house on its block and one of just four early Georgian houses surviving in Cambridge. But as the site for an educational institution serving the public, this old building posed many barriers for people with mobility impairments. "We want to be accessible to the public in all kinds of ways," said CCAE Executive Director James H. Smith. "Physical access is the biggest challenge."

Now with the September completion of major renovations, individuals with disabilities will have vastly improved access to CCAE classes. The historical nature of Brattle House has been preserved and the new landscape echoes the estate's early reputation for its wonderful gardens. Along with a gently sloping walkway, a ramp and an accessible main entrance the new design incorporates traditional materials like the old paving bricks and reintroduces Colonial-era plantings. This gardening project restores an oasis of urban greenery while new lighting enhances the building's historic façade both day and night.

The Georgian character of the house has been maintained, and improved access for people with disabilities has been achieved. Such "successful adaptation to change... mark it as a significant example of historic preservation in Cambridge," says Smith.

### **Third Graders Get Lesson in Disability and Diversity**

How do you get in your car? How does your guide dog know when the traffic light turns green? My sister has a broken arm - is that a disability? What a lot of perceptive questions these third graders had for the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

During the month of May, as part of our goal to educate people in the community about disability and access issues, Commission members, staff and nine additional volunteers visited 28 classes in thirteen Cambridge elementary schools. Kim DeAndrade of the CPS Health Education Office has worked with the Disability Commission for the last several years to coordinate these sessions with the third grade teachers.

Carolyn Thompson, Disability Project Coordinator, says that children are curious and trying to make sense of the differences they encounter. From the adults in their lives they will either learn to fear and ridicule the people and situations that are unfamiliar, or gain an appreciation of the wonderful diversity of people in the world about them. "We hope these visits help the kids become more comfortable around people with physical, mental and sensory impairments and more knowledgeable about the technology and ways we do things that can eliminate barriers for people with disabilities," said Thompson

This program was launched with the third grade because they use a health education curriculum supplement called *The Great Body Shop* that has a unit each spring on disability issues. "We are exploring ways to expand these class visits to more grade levels and would be interested in conversations with other groups as well," says Michael Muehe, Executive Director of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities

## Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

### August 9

**CCPD Monthly Meeting** - 51 Inman Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for public comment

### August 15

**DEADLINE for Barbara Wilensky Gopen Memorial Fellowship** application for an individual wishing to enhance knowledge and skills in developmental disabilities field. The fellowship will be hosted by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI - University Affiliated Program at Children's Hospital) and Graduate College of Education at U. Mass. Boston. Requires minimum commitment of 24 hours/week for 12 months and provides stipend of up to \$20,000 plus fringe benefits. More information is available from William E. Kiernan at ICI, 617-355-6506, [www.childrenshospital.org/ici](http://www.childrenshospital.org/ici) or Daniel Shannon at Mass. Developmental Disabilities Council, 617-727-6374, [www.state.ma.us/mddc](http://www.state.ma.us/mddc).

### Aug 16

**LD/AD/HD Advocacy Group** for persons with Learning Disabilities/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC Somerville Area Office at 5 Middlesex Ave, in Somerville, generally on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month. Task force meets 12 – 2:15 p.m. and support group meets 2:15-3:15 p.m. For more information contact Linn Morrill at [Linn.Morrill@MRC.state.ma.us](mailto:Linn.Morrill@MRC.state.ma.us) or 617-204-3723, or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 voice or 617-497-5257 Fax.

### Aug 21

**Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting, 1-3 p.m. at the State House (Annex), Boston. For more information call Robert Snierson, Chair, at 617-338-6665 voice / 338-6662 TTY or Juanda Shaw at 617-357-5772 voice.

### Aug 22

**Access Advisory Committee for the MBTA** 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room 1. Call 617-973-7507 voice /617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request interpreters. Having problems with your RIDE service? Call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.

**Sept 5**

**Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in group** for information and support on first Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, Kenmore Square in Boston

**Sept 5**

**Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2 - 3:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or [woman@braintrust.org](mailto:woman@braintrust.org) for more information. NO MEETINGS in AUGUST.

**Sept 8**

**Center for Adult Education GRAND OPENING**, 1 p.m. - see article above.

**Sept 11-12, 25**

**Demystifying Job Development**, a 3-day workshop at Holiday Inn, Brookline on the process of assisting people with disabilities to obtain quality jobs. Sponsored by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI). Registration, fee (\$150), and requests for accommodations due 3 weeks prior to the event. For more information contact Evelyn Reyes at 617-355-5371 voice/617-335-7940 fax/617-355-6956 TTY or [evelyn.reyes@tch.harvard.edu](mailto:evelyn.reyes@tch.harvard.edu).

**Sept 13**

**Building a Community: An Orientation to Mass. Early Intervention** for staff, families and other early childhood personnel, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at Home Suites Inn in Waltham. Sponsored by the Early Intervention Training Center of the Federation for Children with Special Needs. For more information call 1-800-331-0688, ext. 159 or check [www.eitrainingcenter.org](http://www.eitrainingcenter.org).

**Sept 13**

**CCPD Monthly Meeting** - 51 Inman Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. with period for public comment.

**Sept 18**

**Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting, 1-3 p.m. at the State House (Annex), Boston. For more information call Robert Snierson, Chair, at 617-338-6665 voice / 338-6662 TTY or Juanda Shaw at 617-357-5772 voice.

**Sept 19**

**Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, peer support group at for women with disabilities / chronic conditions at 2 p.m. See Sept 5<sup>th</sup> listing for details.

**Sept 21-23**

**Abilities EXPO** - a showcase of independent and assisted living products and services at the Bayside Exposition Center in Boston. See, test, and compare everything from computers to athletic equipment to daily living and mobility aids. Check web site for future details [www.abilitiesexpo.com](http://www.abilitiesexpo.com)

**Sept 25-26**

**Community Access Monitor Training in Worcester, MA.** at Executive Office of Easter Seals, 28 Providence Street. Hosted by Center for Living and Working, Inc. (CLW) and Easter Seals. Contact CLW for details, 508-363-1226. Request accommodations by Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>; see Nov 13-14 listing for

program details.

**Sept 26**

**Access Advisory Committee for the MBTA** 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston. See Aug 22 listing for details

**Oct 5**

**Genetics: Ethical Concerns for the Disability Community** conference at Courtyard Marriott in Concord, NH from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Featured panelists include Peter Singer - Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, Andrienne Asch - Professor of Biology, Ethics and the Politics of Human Reproduction at Wellesley, Paul Steven Miller - Commissioner of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John Kemp - attorney, businessman and disability advocate, and several New Hampshire state officials. \$30 registration fee covers lunch and breaks. More information and registration form are available from the New Hampshire Governor's Commission on Disability, 603-271-2774 voice/TTY or e-mail Michael Jenkins at [mjenkins@gov.state.nh.us](mailto:mjenkins@gov.state.nh.us).

**Oct 11**

**CCPD Monthly Meeting** - 51 Inman Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for public comment.

**Oct 17**

**Annual Employment and Disability Event** sponsored by Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, 5:30 p.m. at Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave across from City Hall in Central Square.

**Nov 8**

**CCPD Monthly Meeting** - 51 Inman Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for public comment.

**Nov 13-14**

**Community Access Monitor Training in Cambridge, MA.** at the Central Square Library, 19 Pearl Street, will be hosted by our own Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Take advantage of this great opportunity to learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how to help your community become more accessible. This two-day (9 am - 4:30 p.m.) workshop presented by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) covers regulations of the Mass. Architectural Access Board (MAAB), the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and hands-on practice taking measurements during site surveys. Fee is \$15 for consumers, \$75 for professionals; lunch is included both days. Registration DEADLINE is two weeks prior to the event (Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>) if you are requesting accommodations (large print, Braille, sign language interpreters); otherwise it is 1 week. For more information, contact MOD at 617-727-7440 voice/TTY or 800-322-2020 voice/TTY. This is a scent free event; please do NOT wear perfume, after-shave, cologne, etc.

This Training is also available:

Sept. 25-26 in Worcester, MA

Oct. 24-25 in Abington, MA

**Nov 18**

**Beyond the Ramp: Creating Mental Health Links in the Jewish Community**, 12:30-5:30 p.m. at Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center, Newton, MA. Sponsored by Jewish Community Centers

of Greater Boston. For more information contact Judy Pearl, Director of Special Needs Services, at 617-558-6508 voice/617-965-5175 TTY or [jpearl@jccgb.org](mailto:jpearl@jccgb.org).

**Dec 13**

**CCPD Monthly Meeting & Holiday Gathering** - 51 Inman Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

**Dec 18**

**Employment Law and People with Disabilities: The ADA and Beyond**, a one day workshop at Holiday Inn, Brookline, MA sponsored by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI). Cost is \$75. For more information contact Evelyn Reyes at 617-355-5371 voice/ 617-335-7940 fax/ 617-355-6956 TTY or [evelyn.reyes@tch.harvard.edu](mailto:evelyn.reyes@tch.harvard.edu).

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services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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